DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 333 146 CE 058 124

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TITLE A Fire Safety Pre-Educational Plan.
PUB DATE Apr 91
NOTE 50p.; M.S. Practicum, Nova University.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Practicum Papers (043) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adult Education; Adult Programs; Adult Students; Attitude Change; Community Centers; *Fire Protection; Information Dissemination; Nonformal Education; *Older Adults; *Outcomes of Education; *Program Effectiveness; *Safety Education; *Teaching Methods

ABSTRACT

A weekly dance at a community center was used to develop a teachable moment for active senior citizens regarding fire safety, in order to reduce their injuries and possible loss of life. A target group of active senior citizens 70 years of age and older who frequent the weekly community center dance was established for the program. The program contained four intervention strategies for increasing fire safety awareness: weekly contact with uniformed personnel, informational handouts, a safety tip in a monthly newsletter, and a mute television playing a looping safety message during the dance's intermission. Pretests and posttests were used with the senior citizens, comparing answers for knowledge gained. All safety requests generated by the program were recorded and the selection/procurement of informational brochures by the senior participants was monitored. The results indicated increased levels of fire safety knowledge and brochures taken during the dances along with a sharp increase in the number of requests for programs per month from 0 to 10. The study concluded that the preeducational plan can provide a sound basis for lowering the resistance of older adults toward educational/informational programs. The study recommended that follow-up include the development of a peer counseling group that can be used to monitor the behavioral change of individuals within their residence. (Appendixes include the preprogram survey along with pretest and posttest results, a comparison of the pre/posttest results, and 15 references.) (Author/KC)

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A FIRE SAFETY PRE-EDUCATIONAL PLAN

by

Lynn Rosenbaum

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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A Practicum Report

Submitted to the Faculty of the Center for the Advancement of Education, Nova University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science.

The abstract of this report may be placed in a National Database System for reference.

April 1991

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ABSTRACT

Reducing the Resistance of Older Adults Through a Fire Safety Pre-Educational Plan.
Rosenbaum, Lynn M., 1991: Practicum Report, Nova University,
The Center for the Advancement of Education.
Descriptors: Fire Safety Education/ Safety Education/ Accident Prevention/ Educational Gerontology/ Aging/ Older Adults/ Audiovisual Instruction/ Telecourse/ Closed Circuit Education/ Dance; Cultural Activities/ Dance; Physical Activities

This final report describes a pre-educational plan using the vehicle of a weekly dance at a community center which developed a teachable moment for active senior citizens regarding fire safety to reduce their injury and life loss. A target group of active senior citizens 70 years of age and older who frequent the weekly community center dance was established for the program. The program contained four intervention strategies for increasing fire safety awareness; weekly contact with uniformed personnel, informational handout literature, a safety tip in a monthly newsletter and a mute television playing a looping safety message during the dance's intermission. The writer pre-tested and post-tested the senior citizens comparing answers for knowledge gained and recorded all safety requests generated by the program and monitored the selection/procurement of informational brochures by the senior participants. The results indicated increased levels of fire safety knowledge and brochures taken during the dance along with a sharp increase in the number of program requests per month from zero to ten. It was concluded that the pre-educational plan can provide a sound basis for desensitizing the resistance of older adults toward educational/informational programs. It is recommended in the Follow On to include the development of a peer counseling group which can be utilized to monitor the behavioral change of individuals within their residence. Appendices include pre-program survey along with the pre-test and post-test results.

Authorship Statement

I hereby testify that this paper and the work it reports are entirely my own. When it has been necessary to draw from the work of others, published or unpublished, I have acknowledged such work in accordance with accepted scholarly and editorial practice. I give this testimony freely, out of respect for the scholarship of other professionals in the field and in the hope that my own work, presented here, will earn similar respect.

Lynn Rosenbaum

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CHAPTER I

PURPOSE

Over the past three years the fire service has attempted to reach senior citizens through advertised and requested informational programs. Unfortunately, these programs were poorly attended and had little impact upon the older adult population. Recently, attempts were made to develop peer counseling groups within community residential associations such as mobile home parks and developments. Interest was generated, however, participation was minimal. A search was begun to discover some of the underlying reasons why seniors were a difficult group to reach and how efforts could be improved to encourage their participation in activities.

The target of the pre-educational plan was the adult identified as an active senior citizen, who attended the weekly dance at a community agency. Typically, senior citizens fall into two age groups 55 to 70 years of age and 70 years of age and above. The population targeted in this project was the 70 and above age group. The descriptor active was added to senior citizens to identify older adults who participate in activities outside the home. These active adults usually retain reasonable mobility without the use of artificial aids. (Fisher, 1986)

The community agency sponsoring the popular weekly dance is a non-profit group which depends upon grants, contributions, community funds and activities fees for its budget. Three full-time staff members oversee the operations with non-paid volunteers comprising the balance of the work force. The community agency maintains four activity centers and five adult day care centers, but for the purpose of this report the studies were limited to the main site.

Transportation to the main facility for the active seniors was available in the form of public transportation, community service transportation and/or private vehicles. The attendance to the weekly dance did fluctuate from week to week, however, a core group of 20 persons consistently participated. This core group was comprised of 50 percent male and 50 percent females.

The main facility hosting the dance was located in a community center which was converted from an indoor racquetball court. The largest indoor area was used for a variety of activities and contained television monitors, bingo equipment and a piano. The lighting can be adjusted from bright to dim. During the two hour dance the lights were dimmed, while one wall was illuminated with directional lighting for emphasis on the three piece live band, which was located across from the

room's main entrance. The room was rectangular in shape with 4 x 8 tables and chairs placed side by side at both ends of the room. The three piece band was stationed in front of the long solid wall across from the entrance. Visible from all areas of the room were the four television monitors located six feet above the ground and positioned in the four corners of the room. Outside the dance hall was a meet and greet area complete with a refreshment section, tables and chairs along with a literature display rack. Parking was readily available and access to the building was favorable for people with special needs.

The participation of the active senior citizens was motivated by the desire for socialization and exercise. An hour prior to the weekly dance, lessons were available to any interested persons desiring to learn ballroom dance steps. There was a three dollar cover charge for the dance but the dance lessons were free of charge. Next to a weekly sign-in sheet all available literature such as the monthly newsletter and brochures were available for distribution. Upon arrival to the center the seniors gathered in the meet and greet area before moving into the dance hall. The live band played for two hours with a 15 minute break after the first hour. During the dance and intermission, the lights in the dance hall were dimmed for atmosphere. Those seniors who

were not dancing gathered in small groups at either end of the hall or outside in the meet and greet area.

The writer was the public education specialist for the fire department. Part of the writer's job responsibility was to identify high fire risk populations in the community to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate programs suitable for the identified audience and their needs. The writer was limited to work within the confines of available resources, including personnel, monies, materials and political constraints.

The problem was that senior citizens participated in social activities at a greater rate than taking advantage of informational programs being offered within the community. In a recent survey of attendance at the community social agency it was revealed that on the average 395 persons used the center each day. The attendance at the weekly dance during February and March ranged between 120 and 150 persons regularly. This showed a 25 percent or more significant increase in attendance in similar activities since 1990. (Armitage, 1991) According to the center this is due to an awareness campaign promoting the facility/activities at other senior programs within the county and also due to the increase of seasonal senior residents.

The study also showed that 26 percent of the seniors citizens lived alone while 37 percent lived with their spouses. The

distribution of housing for the senior population revealed that 41 percent lived in mobile homes, 36 percent lived in condominiums, 10 percent in single family homes, 7 percent in apartments, 5.97 percent lived in others and .03 percent lived in campgrounds.

According to national, state and local statistics, elderly persons over 65 years of age were disproportionately represented in fire deaths. Statistics showed that the southeast portion of the United States had the highest fire death rate in single family dwellings. (United States Fire Administration, USFA, 1987) Figures from the 1987 Florida Fire Incident Reporting System (Gunter, 1987) showed that the elderly over the age of 65 years of age suffered injury and subsequent death in single family residences due to fires. (Gunter, 1987)

In addition, the 1987 figures revealed that the highest death rate among the elderly occurred during the months of January and April. Many of these deaths were due to asphyxiation. According to the Florida Fire Incident Reporting System (Gunter, 1987) the leading cause of death was the careless use of smoking materials followed by short circuit/electrical problems and then the careless use of heating equipment.

Playing a significant role in the fire related deaths were the factors of alcohol and/or cigarettes. Other contributing factors

included fire spreading too rapidly, locked or barred windows/doors and lack of egress. It was noted that the state figures differ slightly from the national trend to show the leading cause of fire related death to be unattended cooking. (USFA, 1987)

According to county demographics, 21.2 percent of the population is 45 years of age to 64 years of age and 26.3 percent is 65 years of age and above. (Starmer, 1991) With many of the elderly population residing in single family residences, the fire service carries a deep concern for the potential life loss particularly for elderly persons residing in single family and mobile homes. Often times, the mobile homes are 10 years old or more and do not contain safety features which have been incorporated into the structural design over the past several years.

In the fire service, these older mobile homes are known as "10 second trailers" because they burn so quickly. Many of these trailers lack adequate safety features which allow for quick escape. Some of these unsafe features include windows which are too small to allow for means of escape, faulty electrical wiring which may cause spontaneous fires and poor design which does not allow for two exits from every room.

Previous attempts to reach the senior citizen groups with informational type programs were to no avail. These programs had been offered once a month between the months of January and April to capture the seasonal elderly population, however, due to poor attendance these programs were discontinued.

Discussions between the fire department and a community social service agency revealed this was a common problem to both agencies. According to the community service agency, there was poor participation in all informational programs. Social programs, on the other hand were overflowing with participants. In a comparison study of attendance by the community agency it was revealed that one out of 10 will attend an educational program, whereas, nine out of 10 will participate in a social activity. (Armitage, 1991) It was discovered through discussion, that once the elderly attended an educational program, they were highly motivated to improve their level of personal safety and attend additional informational programs.

There were three objectives tracked during the 10 week implementation period. They included testing, program requests and fire safety brochures. The first objective stated upon completion of the 10 week period the seniors will increase their fire safety knowledge by 25 percent. This was measure[illegible]y

the increase of correct answers on a fire safety post-test from the pre-test.

The second objective indicated that at the end of the 10 week period there would be an increase in fire safety program requests from zero to six. The third and final objective stated 50 percent of the participants would procure fire safety brochures during the 10 week period.

CHAPTER II

RESEARCH AND SOLUTION STRATEGY

In a study of the participation of older adults (Fisher, 1986) a correlation was determined between the educational level and the level of participation in social activities. The desire to improve or change their lifestyle appears to be reflected in all older adults. Those with higher formal education appeared to have an awareness of these needs and will typically seek out some type of activity. The study goes on to say that programs need to include more self-directed learning, skills for building dependable relationships and an increased awareness of the educational opportunities available to older adults. It appears that the more active the older adult, the more life satisfaction is produced by the individual.

There can be barriers, however, which interfere with the senior's participation in learning activities. These can be physical disabilities, lack of transportation (Dean, 1987) or a fixed budget which may not allow the older adult the ability to afford the cost of participating in social activities. Any geographical barriers, which include lack of transportation or a lack of barrier-free facilities for the disabled can present a

problem. Many older adults shun educational activities as they perceive school as being just for children or say "you can't teach an old dog new tricks". Finally, negative stereotypes of older adults can also hinder their socialization and skill building. Many times an older adult may not feel needed or a valued member of society. (White, 1988) By motivating older adults to learn by providing the vehicle and tools to initiate change, community education can influence improved conditions within the community.

Community education as a means to reach out to the population can effectively be employed to address the concerns and needs of the older adult. (Dean, 1987) The educational offering needs to take into consideration the level of formal education found in seniors. This can affect their coping abilities, self concept and attitudes toward continuing education. As mentioned earlier, persons tend to continue behavior patterns started earlier in their life. Those individuals who were socially active remain socially active in later life. This behavior plays a significant role in the motivation of the older adult to seek out social activities. (Fisher, 1986)

According to a study of victimization of elderly persons (Hayes, 1987) older adults have a tremendous sense of fear for

their own safety and tend to protect themselves through isolation.

> The presence of one or more persons with whom the elderly person can have a close intimate relationship seems to be essential to the older person's adjustment to the losses that accompany old age. Hayes (1987:211)

Individuals trained in basic communication skills can impact the concerns of older adults. This can be indicated by their increased involvement with their peers. Peer/Advocate counseling can address the mental, emotional and social needs of the older adult. (Kirkpatrick, 1987) Recipients of a peer counseling program report that they feel less alone, better informed and able to assume responsibility for safeguarding their personal safety. (Hayes, 1987)

Peer counseling/support groups have been effectively used to assist older adults in dealing with debilitating diseases (Kirkpatrick 1987), life changes due to loss of a loved one and victimization support groups. (Hayes, 1987) All of these successful programs focused upon reaching the active older adult and motivating them to participate in the peer counseling program. Emphasized in these groups was the positive reinforcement that the older adult's contributions can play a

significant role in changing behaviors and attitudes of their peers.

Many educators utilize audio visual materials in their programs. These can be slide shows, overheads or television videos or shows. The use of television has universal appeal as it can reach viewers in a variety of settings such as teleconferences, classroom instruction and home study. (Gueulette, 1988) Taking advantage of the fact that most Americans watch a great deal of television, incidental learning can be achieved if thought is given to the viewer and their needs. (Stokes, 1988) Television is most effective when used as a tool for learning when the material is repeated over a period of time. The use of television as a learning tool can be very effective when supported by personal instruction and teaching materials. (Gueulette, 1988)

In looking at some of the existing fire safety programs it was revealed that the majority of the fire safety programs for older adults fall into two distinct categories. The first can be represented by Blueprint for Fire Safety (United States Fire Administration, USFA, 1987) which focused on program content and program delivery by fire personnel. The second category as exemplified by Let's Retire Fire (USFA, 1990) encouraged the

use of peer counseling and community outreach for program delivery along with the inclusion of fire safety information.

Blueprint for Fire Safety (USFA, 1987) was a special program planning guide on basic fire safety lessons. The ideas discussed in the Getting Started chapter focused on attracting as many people as possible to the program. The program suggested ample lead time along with extensive advertising. The program suggested using announcements and newsletters directed toward senior activity centers and communities to spread the word. Another form of advertisement mentioned was the local community calendar or a press release for media follow-up. Finally, Blueprint for Fire Safety, encouraged the use of networking throughout the community and government agencies. The remainder of the program was devoted to safety information and activities for reference by the fire personnel delivering the material to the older adults. These activities might include a skit, a contest, group review and pre/post-tests.

In an review of Let's Retire Fire, there is a significant shift from the fire department delivering the program to the involvement of community organizations. The program guides the reader through a systems approach to planning the presentation by beginning with research to understand the local senior audience, their lifestyle and specific needs.

The step by step plan incorporates a checklist beginning with establishing objectives and an action plan along with an anticipated timeframe until completion. Let's Retire Fire builds upon the concept of recruiting strategic people to assist with the implementation of the plan and then delegation of responsibilities to community groups and individuals who have expressed an interest in helping to promote fire safety. The program encouraged the use of a tracking and evaluation system of the program.

Finally the kit placed heavy emphasis upon the use of media and a department spokesman to effectively outline the fire safety concerns to the senior population. It also encouraged the use of national, state and local statistics to persuade public sentiment in favor of supporting a senior fire safety program.

The problem that currently exists in the fire service is that the fire safety programs have been developed to target the elderly population primarily through delivery of information. Few address the need for a pre-educational plan to approach older adults in motivating them to participate in the fire safety programs. Programs had been previously arranged with the community social agency, but suffered from poor attendance. In developing this practicum proposal it was identified that senior citizens are at high risk of injury or death by fire and that this

target population was a very difficult group to approach with information programs.

In researching with the community service agency what events were well attended, it was discovered that a weekly dance sponsored by the community service agency was a popular activity. It was decided for the purposes of this practicum and assistance to the community service agency to target the active senior citizens who regularly attend social programs.

In reviewing the existing fire safety programs available, the systems approach, found in Let's Retire Fire, encouraged the development of clear cut objectives and an evaluation/monitoring system. This approach was easily included in a pre-educational plan. The use of news releases and announcements had been found to have little effect in increasing program attendance. In addition, the problem that exists in the fire service today is the lack of documentation of fire safety programs, along with the delivery of programs without a true assessment of the needs of the older adult within the local community. By establishing objectives as suggested in Let's Retire Fire, a simple monitoring of the outcome was achieved.

The use of television as an educational tool can bring the safety message directly into the home or in the case of this practicum, be used as a background visual during a well attended

social activity. Even though the older adults were engaged in other activities, during quiet periods of the dance, they can glance at the television and gain some incidental learning.

Supporting the use of the television, literature was made available for procurement. This allowed the message to be distributed to other senior citizens. This information can benefit the individual and their need to feel helpful in distributing the material to a friend or neighbor. This can also be the case with the safety message placed into the monthly newsletter.

Following in the traditional footsteps of fire safety programs, the visibility of uniformed personnel can be used to reinforce the safety message being focused upon through the television and printed materials. The uniformed personnel can contribute much to the program, by satisfying the older adult's need for social interaction.

Many of the strategies discussed were applied to developing a pre-fire safety education plan. The role of the public educator was to develop a comprehensive program which softened the resistance of the older adult to receiving information by developing appropriate safety messages, distributing literature, maintaining visibility and by providing a fire safety video on a mute television during a 10 week implementation period.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

To implement and monitor the program, two-way communication was established between the community agency and fire department utilizing the public educator as a liaison. All efforts of coordination were monitored by the public educator over a 10 week period, as well as the development of any surveys or testing instruments. The public educator did manage any and all activities relating to this practicum proposal.

In order to reach the development stage of future programs, a pre-educational plan to soften the receptivity of the senior population was established. This preliminary program utilized the vehicle of social activity i.e. a weekly dance to develop a network among the senior population.

The activities to support this endeavor consisted of a joint effort between the fire department and the community social service agency. The participants included the fire department, the community social service agency and the senior citizens. By using the vehicle of the weekly dance a pre-educational plan was developed.

It was the responsibility of the receptionist/cashier to distribute questionnaires, point out the location of brochures and screen participants for any complaints regarding the program and its effect on the dance's weekly attendance. The safety brochures were placed in a highly visible display rack next to the entrance to the dance hall.

In addition, monthly safety messages were placed in the community social service agency's newsletter along with the playing of a continuous mute safety message on the television located at the end of the dance hall during the two hour dance. Based upon their availability, uniformed personnel did mingle with the participants of the dance.

During the first week, permission from the three piece band was secured to allow the simultaneous playing of mute televisions during the intermission. As the main facility of the community social service agency was in the fire control district of an adjacent fire department, permission was secured through the involved Fire Marshals, Fire Chiefs and Board of Fire Commissioners.

The receptionist/cashier was approached for support and cooperation in the program. A list of instructions describing the guidelines of the receptionist/cashier's involvement was developed for this position. The set up and use of the existing

audio visual equipment encountered some difficulty in converting the use of the existing equipment for display of the mute looping safety message. In cooperation with a local business a 25 inch television and VCR was loaned to the community center for the 10 week implementation to enable the implementation of this strategy of the practicum. This was setup and secured by the facility's maintenance crew.

At the request of the community service agency, a survey was given to the older adults to determine their willingness to participate in this pre-educational program. (Appendix A.) This was critical to the program, as the community service agency was dependent upon funds collected at the weekly dance to cover a percentage of their operating expenses.

During the second week, a pre-test (Appendix B.) consisting of 15 safety questions was administered during the 15 minute intermission to the participants. Uniformed fire personnel were available during the two hour dance to answer questions and engage in conversation with the participants. The fire personnel were instructed to guide the conversations toward fire safety topics such as, smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, home fire drills and kitchen safety when talking with the participants. Their role was to initiate these subjects

and not to deliver a lecture. Specific questions asked by the participants were addressed.

In the meet and greet area 20 fire safety brochures pertaining to smoke detectors were available for distribution. These were accompanied by the community social service agency's monthly newsletter which contained a monthly fire safety message. In the dancehall, during intermission, a mute fire safety message was simultaneously playing on a television set located at one end of the room.

During the third week, 20 brochures on the subject of mobile home safety were available for distribution to the weekly participants. Uniformed personnel were available during the dance to initiate conversations about fire safety. The mute television safety message was showing segments of safety in the home for the elderly.

During the fourth week, a pattern of consistency was established for the participants of the weekly dance. The focus of the safety message was smoke detectors. This did involve maintaining visible uniformed personnel during the two hour dance in the meet and greet area. At the sign in desk, 20 brochures discussing smoke detectors were available for procurement.

The mute television played fire safety messages during the 15 minute intermission. The messages were selected from a continuous 45 minutes video tape called Fire Care for Senior Citizens. These messages depicted senior citizens engaging in fire safety measures in their homes. This video was ideal as the scenes advance slowly, allowing the viewers ample time to see the information and cast of characters. The scenes were a combination of words and real life characters acting out correct behavior to different hazardous situations often found in the home.

During the fifth week, the focus of the safety message was kitchen/microwave/electrical safety. As the participants arrived, 20 safety brochure packets, consisting of three pamphlets, were available for the procurement by the participants. These were supported by the mute television and uniformed personnel.

During the sixth week, exit drills in the home was the area of concern. This topic area was supported by available materials, particularly, 20 pieces of literature available to the participants. Uniformed personnel were instructed to be sensitive to the older adults physical limitations in performing a quick escape from a burning building. Mute television messages depicted, senior citizens implementing correct escape behavior.

During the seventh week, emphasis was placed upon hurricane preparedness. This encompassed evacuation procedures, survival suggestions and home and personal security needs. Uniformed personnel were instructed to initiate conversations relating to this topic and 20 hurricane tabloids were available for distribution.

During the eighth week, the program focused on the careless use of cigarettes/space heaters. Uniformed personnel were briefed on local statistics which reflected fire related life and property loss due to cigarettes/space heaters. Literature was available to the participants that discussed the safe use of cigarettes/space heaters. The literature was collated into packets for easy access. Supporting messages on the mute television showed what to do if clothes catch on fire and exit drills from the home.

During the ninth week, the audio visual materials, brochures and uniformed personnel were discontinued. The audio visual equipment was returned to the local business along with a letter of appreciation. The literature racks were filled with informational brochures which covered the listed areas of concern. Six months worth of safety tips were submitted to the community social service agency for use in their monthly newsletter.

During the tenth week, contact with the weekly participants was in the form of a 15 question post-test. The test highlighted the areas of fire safety pertaining to smoke detectors, exit drills from the home, kitchen/microwave/electrical safety, hurricane preparedness and the careless use of cigarettes/space heaters. Upon completion of the test, the participants were polled for program requests for their communities/groups.

Over the 10 week period the effectiveness of the techniques of the program were evaluated and adjusted accordingly. Any program requests were recorded and processed through the proper channels according to the guidelines established by the local county fire departments.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The results of the 10 week implementation yielded findings which support the efforts of a pre-educational plan. The monitoring scheme revealed success as indicated by improved activity from the senior population within the county. This was indicated by an increase of program requests, wide procurement of fire safety brochures and knowledge gained.

Over the 10 week period the program was monitored bi-weekly to manage the progress particularly in the areas of program requests, placement of informational brochures for distribution and sustained cooperation from the community social agency. In maintaining the support of the community social agency, the receptionist/cashier was informally interviewed to determine any complaints or adverse effects which might affect the dance's attendance due to the implementation of this practicum. According to this source complaints were held to a minimum, if anything the participants requested more testing and information.

The visibility of uniformed personnel provided tremendous opportunities for social and informational exchanges between

the seniors and emergency workers. At first the uniformed personnel were avoided or perceived with trepidation. With consistent visits and familiar faces the emergency personnel were able to enter into conversations answering questions and guiding discussions toward safety tips in the home. This also served as a good public relations tool for the fire department with the senior citizens. Many questions were answered as to the role of the fire department, particularly in the area of emergency medical response. Side conversations were often overheard between the seniors concerning safety tips they had implemented in their home and the professionalism of the fire service in responding to their needs.

The use of the looping safety message on the mute television was moderately effective. It did promote conversation about relative safety relating to the message being displayed and was intermittently watched by the participants at different times during the intermission, particularly by the people not engaged in conversation. The problem encountered was that it was placed too low and the 25 inch screen was too small to be seen from a distance more than eight feet away. It could have been more effective if multiple televisions were placed side by side displaying the same video or if the screen size was six by eight feet or larger. Many of the seniors did not like the idea of the

television being played during their social activity, however, once the mute television was turned on they did not seem to mind it.

The popularity of the brochures varied based upon the marketing of the cover, the title and the information. To begin with the brochures displayed during weeks four, six and eight; smoke detectors, exit drills in the home and cigarettes/space heaters were barely touched. According to the receptionist the participants were uninterested no matter where they were placed and even when pointed out upon arriving and departing. On the other hand the brochures available during the third, fifth and seventh weeks, mobile home fire safety, kitchen/microwave/electrical safety and the hurricane tabloids were taken immediately.

The unpopular series of literature were all tri-fold pamphlets which referenced safety tips aimed toward senior citizens. Observations confirmed with the community service agency, the receptionist and other senior agencies all agree that seniors do not like to be reminded of their age and will avoid any literature or any reference to it. The only time they appear to embrace this notion is for senior citizen discounts.

The other series of brochures were more unorthodox in their presentation. All three were colorful multi page brochures,

without reference to age. All three brochures had highly contrasting colors used on the front page with bold print and self explanatory illustrations/photos. These brochures were so popular that the receptionist received numerous requests for more.

The post-test scores (Appendix C.) reflected a 22 percent gain of knowledge from the pre-test (Appendix D.). This average is slightly under the anticipated increase, however, the results still demonstrated success as indicated by the number of correct responses in the post test. These were monitored for an increase in specific areas of knowledge. In addition, to knowledge gained, the success was also determined by an increase in the overall number of correct answers marked on the post test. Several of the questions did not show a sharp increase due to the general fire safety awareness maintained by the senior citizens.

Other areas that were monitored for knowledge/awareness gained were the increase of program requests from zero to 10 during the implementation period. This last area showed a significant increase in activity as reflected in four residential groups requesting a series of meetings each for a grand total of 10 programs. This can be attributed to the high visibility of the fire department, most particularly the uniformed personnel.

Participants seemed to identify with an individual and requested a program with that person. In addition, the distribution of the community service agency's monthly newsletter containing the monthly safety tip received favorable feedback from several participants, however, the effectiveness of this effort was difficult to monitor.

CHAPTER V

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based upon the endeavors of this practicum, a network has been established within the older adult community and social service agencies which serve this population. It is the intention of the public educator to continue developing these contacts and work with established task forces of motivated senior citizens. The purpose of these task forces will be to identify fire safety problems within the senior community and develop strategies to address those needs. Some problems currently identified are communication networks, apathy, poor delivery methods and/or a highly transient population referencing the seasonal residents. It is will be the responsibility of the task forces to plan interventions which would effectively combat these and other issues. This will serve to develop a community based solution to community based problems.

The development of a task force and peer counseling groups to specifically address community problem(s) will be forthcoming after the completion of this practicum. It is the intention of these programs to shift the role of delivery from the fire department to the community, in particular to the senior

population to meet their needs. As a result, the mobile home parks and residential communities can monitor their own needs accordingly.

Secondly, it is the public educator's intention to use the vehicle of this practicum to develop a strong relationship with a group of active seniors from each residential community to be trained as peer counselors. By using this method the distribution of information will have greater impact by reaching a larger number of people. This program will also be expanded to encompass a peer training group which will serve the needs of the community agency. It has been expressed by the agency that they are planning to implement a computerized bulletin board "Senior Net" program for self directed use by the older population. The use of computerized bulletin boards available through the local community agency will enable the senior citizens to access health, financial and social service information for their use. This would be well complemented by the use of peer counselors to train seniors in computer literacy.

Another area which has arisen from this practicum is a strong communication tie between the community service agency and the fire department. This has served as a beneficial link for both agencies to promote educational programs to the senior population. An offshoot of this network is the opportunity to

release information through several popular local and regional print medias targeted towards the older adult.

Upon completion of the practicum, these programs will be developed and result in a handbook of policy and procedure guidelines for the senior citizen group to follow within their respective residential communities. A projected timeline for implementation for the integration of the task forces, peer counseling and informational programs have been earmarked for Fall of 1991.

It has been recognized that the pre-educational plan developed for this practicum has "uncovered" numerous opportunities within the senior population. These reflect the degree of success of this practicum and the ability of the public educator to effectively monitor and prioritize these opportunities for future development.

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APPENDIX A

PRE-IMPLEMENTATION SURVEY RESULTS
25 Participants

Dear Friend,

The Council On Aging in cooperation with your local fire departments will be trying a new pilot program at the Senior Center over the next several weeks. Your help is essential to the success of this program. Please feel free to share your thoughts and comments with the available personnel or write them down in the space provided at the bottom of this form. Thank you for your cooperation.

1. Do you attend the weekly dances for exercise and social get-togethers? YES or NO

100% of the participants said that they attend the week dance for exercise and social get-togethers.

2. Would you like to participant in a weekly safety program? 88% YES 12% NO

3. Would you mind a mute television playing during the intermission? 28% Yes 72% No

4. Would you be willing to have a mute television playing during the dance? 44% YES 56% NO

5. Would you be willing to stay after the dance to participate in a 10-15 minute educational program? 28% YES 88% NO

6. As a regular participant will the weekly safety program keep you from attending the dance? 16% YES 84% NO

Comments:

All of the written comments indicated that the $3.00 cost of the dance was too high.

APPENDIX B

PRE-TEST RESULTS
25 PARTICIPANTS

Dear Friend,

Thank you for your willingness to participate in the pilot program sponsored by the Council On Aging and your local fire department. We would like to ask that you take a few moments to complete this questionnaire to help us determine your level of safety awareness. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated. Again, thank you for your support.

Select the best answer:

1. The leading cause of fire related death in the State of Florida is caused by:

a. the careless use of cigarettes 52%
b. the careless use of fire arms 24%
c. drowning 0%
d. unattended cooking 24%

2. To double your chances of surviving a fire, install a smoke detector on the ceiling of each level of your home, especially outside the:

a. living room 8%
b. kitchen 36%
c. bedroom 56%
d. bathroom 0%

3. The BEST immediate treatment for minor burns is to apply:

a. butter 4%
b. ointment 12%
c. cool water 72%
d. baking soda 12%

Boldface type indicates the correct answer.

4. If you use a space heater in your bedroom, before going to bed you should:

a. close the window 8%
b. turn off the space heater 68%
c. remove combustibles from around the space heater 0%
d. move the space heater to the center of the room 24%

5. If your clothes should catch on fire you should:

a. run for help 0%
b. take off the clothes 4%
c. wrap a blanket around your self 24%
d. stop, drop and roll 72%

6. The leading cause of injury/death across all ages is:

a. careless use of firearms 32%
b. falls 40%
c. burns 28%
d. cooking 0%

7. Falls in the home can be minimized by:

a. sitting down as much as possible 0%
b. using grab bars in the bathroom and lowering the height of beds 64%
c. wearing rubber soled shoes 28%
d. wearing eyeglasses 8%

8. In the event of a hurricane and an evacuation order has been given, you should:

a. by law you must leave your home, especially your mobile home to seek shelter in a safe area 80%
b. listen to the radio 12%
c. watch television 8%
d. stay home and wait to see what will happen 0%

9. In the event of an emergency and you need help you would FIRST:

a. call your neighbor or friend 4%
b. dial 9-1-1 96%
c. yell for help 0%
d. call a family member 0%

10. A frequent fire risk in the kitchen is:

a. unattended cooking 32%
b. cooking with loose, dangling clothes 16%
c. using small pans on large burners 0%
d. all of the above 52%

11. The BEST way to put out a small grease fire in a pan is to:

a. remove the pan from the stove 8%
b. throw some baking soda on the fire 56%
c. cover the pan with a lid 32%
d. throw water on the fire 4%

12. If an electrical cord feels warm to the touch or frayed, you should:

a. wrap it with electrical tape 24%
b. throw it away 76%
c. use it for short periods of time 0%
d. try a different electrical outlet 0%

13. After a battery operated smoke detector is installed, remember to:

a. replace the detector every three months 8%
b. change the batteries once a year on your birthday 80%
c. paint the detector 0%
d. remove the batteries if the alarm goes off due to cooking heat or smoke 12%

14. A home escape plan should include:

a. plan two escape routes from every room 20%
b. practice a monthly home fire drill 20%
c. designating a meeting place outside the home 8%
d. all of the above 52%

15. In the event of a fire and you are visiting a motel/hotel, when you leave your room you should remember to take:

a. a towel 8%
b. your shoes 36%
c. your room key 36%
d. your suitcase 20%

APPENDIX C
POST-TEST RESULTS
25 PARTICIPANTS

Dear Friend,

Thank you for your willingness to participate in the pilot program sponsored by the Council On Aging and your local fire department. We would like to ask that you take a few moments to complete this questionnaire to help us determine your level of safety awareness. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated. Again, thank you for your support.

Select the best answer:

1. The leading cause of fire related death in the State of Florida is caused by:

a. the careless use of cigarettes 80%
b. the careless use of fire arms 16%
c. drowning 0%
d. unattended cooking 4%

2. To double your chances of surviving a fire, install a smoke detector on the ceiling of each level of your home, especially outside the:

a. living room 4%
b. kitchen 8%
c. bedroom 88%
d. bathroom 0%

3. The BEST immediate treatment for minor burns is to apply:

a. butter 4%
b. ointment 8%
c. cool water 84%
d. baking soda 4%

Boldface type indicates the correct answer.

4. If you use a space heater in your bedroom, before going to bed you should:

a. close the window 4%
b. turn off the space heater 84%
c. remove combustibles from around the space heater 0%
d. move the space heater to the center of the room 12%

5. If your clothes should catch on fire you should:

a. run for help 0%
b. take off the clothes 0%
c. wrap a blanket around yourself 20%
d. stop, drop and roll 80%

6. The leading cause of injury/death across all ages is:

a. careless use of firearms 20%
b. falls 60%
c. burns 20%
d. cooking 0%

7. Falls in the home can be minimized by:

a. sitting down as much as possible 0%
b. using grab bars in the bathroom and lowering the height of beds 76%
c. wearing rubber soled shoes 20%
d. wearing eyeglasses 4%

8. In the event of a hurricane and an evacuation order has been given, you should:

a. by law you must leave your home, especially your mobile home to seek shelter in a safe area 100%
b. listen to the radio 0%
c. watch television 0%
d. stay home and wait to see what will happen 0%

9. In the event of an emergency and you need help you would FIRST:

a. call your neighbor or friend 0%
b. dial 9-1-1 100%
c. yell for help 0%
d. call a family member 0%

10. A frequent fire risk in the kitchen is:

a. unattended cooking 16%
b. cooking with loose, dangling clothes 8%
c. using small pans on large burners 0%
d. all of the above 76%

11. The BEST way to put out a small grease fire in a pan is to:

a. remove the pan from the stove 4%
b. throw some baking soda on the fire 32%
c. cover the pan with a lid 64%
d. throw water on the fire

12. If an electrical cord feels warm to the touch or frayed, you should:

a. wrap it with electrical tape 12%
b. throw it away 88%
c. use it for short periods of time 0%
d. try a different electrical outlet 0%

13. After a battery operated smoke detector is installed, remember to:

a. replace the detector every three months 0%
b. change the batteries once a year on your birthday 92%
c. remove the batteries if the detector sounds the alarms unnecessarily 0%
d. burn toast in the morning to test the detector 8%

14. A home escape plan should include:

a. planning two exits from every room 12%
b. practicing a monthly home fire drill 4%
c. designating a meeting place outside the home 4%
d. all of the above 80%

15. In the event of a fire and you are visiting a motel/hotel, when you leave your room you should remember to take:

a. a towel 4%
b. your shoes 16%
c. your room key 60%
d. your suitcase 20%

APPENDIX D
TABLE OF COMPARISON
PRE-TEST / POST-TEST RESULTS

Question No.	Pre-test Results	Post-test Results	% Gained
1a.	**52%**	**80%**	**28%**
1b.	24%	16%	
1c.	0%	0%	
1d.	24%	4%	
2a.	8%	4%	
2b.	36%	8%	
2c.	**56%**	**88%**	**32%**
2d.	0%	0%	
3a.	4%	4%	
3b.	12%	8%	
3c.	**72%**	**84%**	**12%**
3d.	12%	4%	
4a.	8%	4%	
4b.	**68%**	**84%**	**16%**
4c.	0%	0%	
4d.	24%	12%	
5a.	0%	0%	
5b.	4%	0%	
5c.	24%	20%	
5d.	**72%**	**80%**	**12%**
6a.	32%	20%	
6b.	**40%**	**60%**	**20%**
6c.	28%	20%	
6d.	0%	0%	
7a.	0%	0%	
7b.	**25%**	**76%**	**51%**
7c.	28%	20%	
7d.	8%	4%	

Boldface type indicates the correct answer.

Question No.	Pre-test Results	Post-test Results	% Gained
8a.	**80%**	**100%**	**20%**
8b.	12%	0%	
8c.	8%	0%	
8d.	0%	0%	
9a.	4%	0%	
9b.	**96%**	**100%**	**4%**
9c.	0%	0%	
9d.	0%	0%	
10a.	32%	16%	
10b.	16%	8%	
10c.	0%	0%	
10d.	**52%**	**76%**	**24%**
11a.	8%	4%	
11b.	56%	32%	
11c.	**32%**	**64%**	**32%**
11d.	4%	0%	
12a.	24%	12%	
12b.	**76%**	**88%**	**12%**
12c.	0%	0%	
12d.	0%	0%	
13a.	8%	0%	
13b.	**80%**	**92%**	**12%**
13c.	0%	0%	
13d.	12%	8%	
14a.	20%	12%	
14b.	20%	4%	
14c.	8%	4%	
14d.	**52%**	**80%**	**28%**
15a.	8%	4%	
15b.	36%	16%	
15c.	**36%**	**60%**	**24%**
15d.	20%	20%	